



MACDONALD ILLUSTRATED EDITION







H. RIDER HAGGARD

# SHE

A HISTORY OF ADVENTURE

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
MALCOLM ELWIN



ILLUSTRATED BY HOOKWAY COWLES

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I inscribe this history to

ANDREW LANG

in token of personal regard

and of

my sincere admiration for his learning and his works

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## INTRODUCTION

by MALCOLM ELWIN

WHEN the manuscript of *Sue* was offered to the firm of Longmans, their literary adviser, Andrew Lang, pronounced it "the most extraordinary romance I ever read." Normally in those days new novels were issued in three volumes, and a sale of four or five hundred copies assured a modest profit for the publisher. But, backed by Lang's opinion, the publishers decided that this was a case for defying the

achieved the then phenomenal sale of twenty-five thousand copies.

The author was a young man of thirty, with a background little indicative of literary possibilities. Henry Rider Haggard was born on 22nd June, 1856, the eighth of ten children begotten by the squire of Bradenham Hall, near East Dereham, in Norfolk. Descended from an old family of country gentry, Haggard's father was the third of his line at Bradenham, and while his eldest son would in due time succeed him, family tradition required the younger sons to be trained for the services or recognised professions. After four of his elder brothers had been to Winchester, Westminster, or Haileybury, funds were insufficient to send Rider Haggard to one of the big public schools, and he went to Ipswich Grammar School, where his only achievement was captaincy of the second football team.

His mother was once irritated into describing him as "heavy as lead in body and mind," and one of his school



reports excited his father to exclaim that he was "only fit to be a greengrocer." His reputation for intellectual limitations was regarded as qualifying him for the activity of a military career, but after leaving Ipswich he failed to pass the army entrance examination, being ploughed in Euclid. Apparently his father felt an impatience of diplomats not uncommon among country gentlemen, for the army's rejected was then sent to a London "crammer" to be prepared for entrance to the Foreign Office. But before Rider Haggard was due again to face an examination, his father heard that a Norfolk neighbour, Sir Henry Bulwer, had been appointed lieutenant-governor of Natal, and as he "never lost the chance of finding an opening for one of his sons," he requested from Bulwer a place on his staff for Rider.

For a year young Haggard made himself useful as one of the governor's junior secretaries; he "copied dispatches, received guests," and learned much about buck-hunting and the African natives. Energetic, capable, and tenaciously thorough in any undertaking inviting his interest, the unsatisfactory boy became at nineteen a young man of exceptional promise in the administrative service. In his autobiography, *The Days of My Life*, published after his death, but written during the years 1911 and 1912, he thus describes himself:

"I was a tall young fellow, quite six feet, and slight; blue-eyed, brown-haired, fresh-complexioned, and not at all bad-looking. The Zulus gave me the name of 'Indanda,' which meant, I believe, one who is tall and pleasant-natured. Mentally I was impressionable, quick to observe and learn whatever interested me. . . . Even then I had the habit of looking beneath the surface of characters and events, and of trying to get at their springs and causes. I liked to understand any country or society in which I found myself. I despised those who merely floated on the stream of life and never tried to dive into its depths."

His interest in the African natives and their history recommended him to Sir Theophilus Shepstone, who, on being appointed Special Commissioner to the Transvaal at the end of 1876, invited Haggard to join his staff.

Under Shepstone he came into daily contact with an interpreter named Fynney, whose anecdotes of the Zulus supplied material for *Nada the Lily*, and the Swazi hero Umslopogaas, who figures under his own name in *Nada the Lily* and *Allan Quatermain*. Umslopogaas, who must have been over eighty when he died in 1897, was the son of a King of Swaziland, and at one time served in the Nyati Regiment, "the crack corps of the country." At this time he was "a tall, thin, fierce-faced fellow with a great hole above the left temple, over which the skin pulsed, that he had come by in some battle." How closely Haggard's fiction followed fact in the case of this character

used to relate  
bat, of whom  
the first was a chief called Shive, always making use of a battle-axe." When Haggard's novels were widely popular, and a lady asked him if he was not proud that his name appeared in books read by white men all over the world, Umslopogaas replied with stately dignity, "No, Inkoosikazi, to me it is nothing. Yet I am glad that Indanda has set my name in writings that will not be forgotten, so that, when my people are no more a people, one of them at least may be remembered." To-day, little more than fifty years since the death of Umslopogaas, *Nada the Lily* survives to remind its readers of the native race that preserved traditions of a tribal savagery—sombre in its cruelty and resplendent with a poetic and romantic dignity—enduring for centuries before its sudden submersion beneath the civilisation of modern South Africa.

The fanciful improbabilities of Haggard's ~~novels~~ derive from the habit of imaginative speculation developed during his years in Africa. Native history ~~contains~~ oral tradition; legend and superstition afford the vaguest outlines to be embellished by imagination.

lavish colourings in an effort to visualise the immense panorama of Africa's history. In his enthusiasm for African lore Haggard was encouraged by his chief. The son of a missionary, Theophilus Shepstone had been in South Africa from early childhood; having learned to speak many Kaffir dialects like a native, he became a government interpreter at the age of eighteen. For twenty years he had been Secretary for Native Affairs in Natal when, in 1876, he was knighted on his appointment to the Transvaal Commission. He owed his appointment to his unrivalled knowledge of the natives, and this knowledge determined his policy. He knew that Cetwywayo, the Zulu king, while amicably disposed towards the English, was being irritated by the corrupt and unstable conduct of the republic into planning an onslaught on the Boers. It therefore appears, as Haggard asserted in *Cetwywayo and His White Neighbours*, that Shepstone saved the Boers from massacre by the Zulus in annexing the Transvaal as a crown colony.

Unhappily the High Commissioner, Sir Bartle Frere, exploded Shepstone's strategy by going to war with Cetwywayo and crippling the Zulu power, so enabling the Boers under Kruger to rebel successfully at Majuba in 1881. In his autobiography Haggard remarks with justice that the Transvaal cost a million pounds to surrender after Majuba and two or three hundred millions to reconquer in the Boer War, yet it was originally annexed by Shepstone for a total expense of ten thousand pounds, the price of a thousand acres in an English county. Sentimentalists at a distance from the scene of events omitted to recognise, at the date of either Majuba or Mafeking, that the Boers were interloping settlers like ourselves and that South Africa belonged by right to the black races, whose splendid physical and moral well-being British and Boers alike undermined by the introduction of institutional Christianity and cheap whisky. Loyally defending Shepstone in his first book, *Cetwywayo and His White Neighbours*, Haggard told the whole story from the point of view of those who knew South Africa at first hand. Later, in the handsome dedication of

*Nada the Lily*, published in the year before Shepstone's death, he quoted an extract from Cetywayo's message at the time of the annexation, indicating the motive for Shepstone's policy, and roundly declared that "enemies have borne false witness" against him.

Returning from duty on the commission, Haggard became a clerk in the Colonial Secretary's office; soon afterwards, though only just twenty-one, he was appointed Master and Registrar of the High Court of the Transvaal, with a salary of four hundred pounds a year. But after the departure of Shepstone and many of his colleagues, he became acridly critical of their successors' methods. He was also "utterly reckless and unsettled" as the result of such a blighted romance as he ascribed to Ernest Kershaw and Eva Ceswick in *The Witch's Head* and to Leonard Outram and Jane Beach in *The People of the Mist*; he had been in correspondence with a girl in England, and considered himself engaged to be married till "one day the mail cart arrived and all was over." Acknowledging that "it was a mad thing to do," as he had "a high office and was well thought of," he decided in 1879 to "shake off the dust of Government service and farm ostriches" in partnership with a colleague named Arthur Cochrane—whose native pseudonym of Matumazahn, "he who sleeps with one eye open," was borrowed for Allan Quatermain.

Before starting on his new venture, he returned to England for a holiday prolonged to eighteen months by courtship and marriage. His bride—the only daughter and heiress of Major John Margitson, of Ditchingham House, Norfolk—was under age and a ward in Chancery, and while legal processes pursued their expensive course to permit the marriage, Haggard deferred to prudence and his father in unsuccessfully applying for reinstatement in the colonial service. After his marriage in August 1880 he returned to South Africa with his wife and two servants, one of whom, a Norfolk groom, supplied the model for Job in *Sir*. Conditions in the country were no longer suitable for a wife and family. The Haggards' farm, Rooipoint, and their

house, Hilldrop—described in *Jess* as Mooifontein—were fortunately only a mile and a half from the town of Newcastle, where the presence of British troops was some assurance of safety, but the surrounding countryside was infested with skirmishing Boers, and frequently the sound of firing afforded anxious distraction from the routine of farm work. At night they slept with revolvers under their pillows, loaded rifles leaning against the beds, horses saddled in the stables, and Kaffirs posted on the hills to give warning of a possible incursion by the Boers. By May 1881, when his eldest child was born, Haggard had decided that “henceforth we can look for no peace or security in South Africa” and was “seriously debating clearing out of this part of the world.” A decision was precipitated by the illness of his partner, Cochrane, and the autumn found Haggard finally returning to England to read for the bar at Lincoln’s Inn.

In a furnished house at Norwood, during the early months of 1882, he wrote the story of recent events in South Africa in *Cetywayo and His White Neighbours*. After vainly offering the manuscript to several publishers, he agreed to contribute fifty pounds—“although at the time I could ill afford it”—towards the cost of publication. Though he received encouraging letters from several notabilities to whom he sent presentation copies, including Lord Carnarvon, Colonial Secretary under Disraeli, and Lord Randolph Churchill, only a hundred and fifty-four copies were sold in the year of publication, and the publisher lamented a loss of some thirty-three pounds beyond the contribution of fifty pounds. When Haggard became known as a novelist, the publisher recovered his loss with interest, for library subscribers, inquiring for other books by the author of *She*, were misled by the attractive title of *Cetywayo and His White Neighbours* into expecting it to be a novel, and at the time of the Boer War in 1899, a shilling reprint of the part relating Shepstone’s annexation of the Transvaal sold thirty thousand copies.

Since 1876, when he had sent a description of a Zulu war-dance to the *Gentleman’s Magazine*, he had written

occasional magazine articles, and regarding writing as a useful means of supplementing his income while reading for the bar, he naturally turned to fiction as the most popular and profitable medium. One Sunday in church he and his wife were impressed by the appearance of "a singularly beautiful and pure-faced young lady," and discussing her afterwards, agreed that she seemed a fitting heroine for a romance. Both began to write a story about her, but while his wife tired of the game after writing a few sheets, Haggard persevered to complete a first draft of the novel that eventually appeared as *Dawn*. Revised as *Angela, or There Remaineth a Rest*, it was vainly offered to several publishers before falling into the hands of a friendly writer named John Cordy Jeaffreson. Though he thought it "better than two-thirds of the stories that are published," Jeaffreson warned him against "the notion that novels are dashed off" and advised him to rewrite the novel, "suppressing much, expanding much, making every chapter a picture by itself, and polishing up every sentence so that each page bears testimony to the power of its producer." Haggard never shrank from hard work, and spent four months in re-writing the novel during the summer of 1883, following Jeaffreson's advice in devising that the story should end happily with Angela's marriage instead of tragically with her death. It was then accepted by Jeaffreson's publishers, Hurst and Blackett, who published it as *Dawn* (instead of *Angela*, as that title was found to have been used before) in three volumes early in 1884.

According to Haggard's own account, his models as novelists were James Payn—a popular and prolific novelist, now remembered only for *Lost Sir Massingberd*—and R. D. Blackmore, the author of *Lorna Doone*. But *Dawn* appears to have been cast in the mould of a contemporary novelist more popular than either Payn or Blackmore. Prototypes of all four major characters may be found in the novels of Mrs. Henry Wood. The hero has "an intellect . . . face that gave signs of . . . that a little weak about . . ."

one would like to know," to women of the world "by no means uninteresting, and one who might, according to the circumstances of his life, develop into anything or—nothing in particular." There is the same bold, bad, brilliant woman of the world as Charlotte Paim of *The Shadow of Ashlydyat*; there is the familiar scheming villain; and the celestial purity of Angela is a commonplace essential in all the suffering beauties of Mrs. Wood's books. There is a death-bed scene as racking as any of the three or four similar orgies of pathos that Mrs. Wood furnished in almost every one of her novels (Dickens fathered with his Little Nell a vast Victorian progeny of death-bed heroines), and the suicide of the defeated worldly woman satisfies all her striving after crude sensationalism. But while reflecting many of Mrs. Wood's worst vices, *Dawn* possesses all her virtues—rapid narrative, abundant incident, fertility of invention, and a strong sense of dramatic effect.

*Dawn* was followed within the year by *The Witch's Head*, also published by Hurst and Blackett. While the earlier book fell flat, *The Witch's Head* was well reviewed and sufficiently read for the whole edition of five hundred copies to be sold. But the small profit on this book only reimbursed his outlay on *Cetywayo*, and as *Dawn* had earned nothing, Haggard had produced three long books without financial reward. He was called to the bar in 1884, and while he was waiting for briefs, a reading of Stevenson's recently published *Treasure Island* suggested the idea of beguiling his spare time in writing a story for boys. In the evenings after days in the Temple, standing at a pedestal writing-table in his dining-room, he wrote *King Solomon's Mines* in "about six weeks."

After being promptly rejected by Hurst and Blackett, the manuscript visited so many publishers that it presented a "battered" appearance on reaching W. E. Henley, a reader for Cassell's. Henley showed it to Andrew Lang, who wrote to Haggard that he found "so much invention and imaginative power and knowledge of African character in your book that I almost prefer it to *Treasure Island*." But Lang

was unable to interest Longmans, and on Henley's advice Cassell's invited Haggard to interview "a business-like editor whose name I never knew." He was offered a choice of two agreements—a sale of the copyright for a hundred pounds, or an advance of fifty pounds on account of a ten per cent royalty. As the writing had cost him so little labour by comparison with his previous books, his first impulse was gratefully to accept the hundred pounds, and only a remark by a clerk in the office decided him to choose the royalty agreement. On publication in October 1885, *King Solomon's Mines* enjoyed a much more immediate success than *Treasure Island*, running into a sixth thousand before Christmas—an achievement materially implemented by an enthusiastic review by Lang in the *Saturday Review*, concluding with the generously sweeping statement that "we would give many novels, say eight hundred (that is about the yearly harvest), for such a book as *King Solomon's Mines*."

Before the publication of *King Solomon's Mines*, Haggard wrote its sequel, *Allan Quatermain*, during two months of his summer vacation between July and September. By the last day of the year 1885 he completed *Jess*, his story of South African life; a month later, he began writing *Sbe*, which he finished after only six weeks on 18th March 1886. *Sbe* preceded the other two in publication, for, after the success of *King Solomon's Mines*, Haggard's serial rights were in demand, and *Sbe* was serialised in a weekly paper, *The Graphic*, from 2nd October 1886 to 8th January 1887, while the others made a more leisurely appearance in monthly magazines. *Jess* featured in the *Cornhill Magazine* between May 1886 and April 1887 before book publication in the spring of the latter year; *Allan Quatermain* ran through *Longman's Magazine* from January to August 1887, with book publication in July.

In this rapidity of output Haggard ignored the advice, not only of Jeaffreson, but of a much more important novelist. Writing to congratulate him on *King Solomon's Mines*, Robert Louis Stevenson warned him to "be more



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careful"—“you do quite well enough to take more trouble, and some parts of your book are infinitely beneath you.” It is significant of their different methods that Stevenson criticised the story’s beginning as “slipshod,” remarking that “what you have still to learn is to take trouble with those parts which do not excite you.” Confessedly Haggard began with *Treasure Island* in mind; the idea is imitated even to the map of the hidden trove, the route to King Solomon’s treasure being written in the blood of the long-dead Portuguese explorer, the plan of the island in the red ink of the pirate Captain Flint. For his unknown land, Haggard chose the wilds of Central Africa, then largely unexplored, in preference to an imaginary island, since the scene enabled him to draw upon his knowledge of Africa. Like Stevenson, he began by assembling his party of treasure-hunters, but once started, he abandoned Stevenson’s guidance to follow his own instinct. There is no delay in starting the hunt, such as readers found a fault in *Treasure Island* as a serial. The artist in Stevenson required a circumstantial introduction, showing how it happened that the individual members of the party came to make the venture; Haggard evaded preamble by causing Allan Quatermain to tell such a traveller’s story as he had himself often heard from his friend Fynney, the interpreter.

The beginning foreshadows the sequel: much more happens in *King Solomon’s Mines* than in *Treasure Island*. Stevenson was always consciously handicapped by poverty of invention, but Haggard had the unfailing imagination of the born story-teller. In this strength lay his weakness, for his fancy leaps ever faster than his pen; in his haste to pursue the quarry ahead, he slurs over one scene to be on with the next. Stevenson would have occupied a chapter in describing the horrors of the night in the ice-bound mountain cave, culminating in the terrifying discovery of Don José’s corpse; Haggard takes less than two pages, scamping the details and so sacrificing much dramatic effect. The same eagerness to hurry on with his story prevented him from contriving careful studies of character;

with possibly the single exception of Umslopogaas in *Allan Quatermain* and *Nada the Lily*, not one of his characters emerges before the mind's eye even dimly beside the vital reality of Long John Silver or Alan Breck.

As reader for Smith, Elder and Co., James Payn rejected the second draft of *Dawn* as lacking dramatic interest—"the interest that comes from an exhibition of the influence of character upon character." Unconcerned with psychological subtleties, Haggard was satisfied that characters should be "definite, even at the cost of a little crudeness;" they were merely the *dramatis personae* or necessary instruments of incident and adventure. In his view "the story is the thing, and every word in the book should be a brick to build its edifice." The "really needful" qualities of fiction were "adventure—how impossible it matters not at all, provided it is made to appear possible—and imagination, together with a clever use of coincidence and an ordered development of the plot." From his own experience he considered that romances "should be written rapidly," and "if possible, not re-written, since wine of this character loses its bouquet when it is poured from glass to glass."

When he sat down to write *She*, he had no clear notion of what he intended to write, except the idea of "an immortal woman inspired by an immortal love." "All the rest," he said, "shaped itself as I wrote." "It came faster than I could write." He made no plan like Anthony

that "it was never re-written, and the manuscript carries but few corrections," adding that "it was written at ~~wine~~ heat, almost without rest, and that is the best way to ~~com-~~pose."

But Haggard at this time cherished literary ~~ambitions~~ beyond those of a merely successful story-teller. The ~~success~~ of *She* relieved the strict financial economy observed ~~since~~ his marriage, and he took a trip to Egypt ~~and~~ in 1887.

with the object of collecting local colour for a novel about Cleopatra, a subject obviously at the back of his mind when he sketched the personality of Ayesha in *She*. On his return to England, he found himself "quite a celebrity," for *Allan Quatermain* had continued the success of *She*; twenty thousand copies were sold in the month of publication, ten thousand being subscribed in London alone, a figure which Longmans believed "more than has ever been subscribed of a 6s. novel before." He was disappointed that *Cleopatra*, which ran serially in the *Illustrated London News* before book publication in 1889, did not enjoy equal success. It was written in two months, immediately after his return from Egypt, and he believed it to be his best work up to that time. Having absorbed much knowledge of Egyptian antiquities, he allowed his enthusiasm for the subject to override his theory that a story should be told simply and directly. He was depressed when Lang, after reading the manuscript, advised him to

"Put *Cleopatra* away for as long as possible, and then read it as a member of the public. You will find, I think, that between chapters three and eight it is too long, too full of antiquarian detail, and too slow in movement to carry the general public with it. . . . It is not an advantage for a story to be told in an archaic style (this of course is unavoidable). For that reason I would condense a good deal and it could be done."

Supported by his publisher, Charles Longman, he disregarded Lang's advice, arguing that the "cutting out of passages resembles the pulling of bricks from a built wall, since it will be found that every, or nearly every passage, even if it is of a reflective character, is developed or alluded to in some portion of what follows." Respecting Lang's judgment and worried by his criticism, he compromised clumsily by explaining in a prefatory note that "unfortunately it is scarcely possible to write a book of this nature and period without introducing a certain amount of illustrative matter, for by no other means can the long dead

past be made to live again before the reader's eyes," and "respectfully suggesting" that "such students as seek a story only . . . should exercise the art of skipping and open this tale at its second book." Reviewers seized upon this advertised weakness as a target for sarcastic barbs, and Haggard "began to feel a certain repletion" of professional critics when they stupidly disparaged his re-creation of Cleopatra because Shakespeare had written a play about her.

Success was tempered by other vexations. *Colonel Quaritch, V.C.*, which followed *Jess* as a novel in a modern setting against a country background like *Dawn*, was abused privately by Lang as "the worst book that ever was written," and its successor, *Nesta Amor*, was actually not offered for publication on Lang's advice. Another trouble arose from his having agreed, after the first edition of *The Witch's Head* sold out, that a publisher should reprint *Dawn* and *The Witch's Head* in a two-shilling edition on condition that the publisher should have the right to issue similar cheap reprints of any novels that he might write during the following five years. Haggard had forgotten this condition of the contract when he made agreements for his subsequent books, and a lawsuit was avoided only on his undertaking to write two new novels specially for the firm. In the first of these two novels, *Mr. Meeson's Will*, he avenged his aggrieved feelings by citing the terms of his agreement as those under which the repulsive Mr. Meeson

to his friend Cochrane, the original Macumazahn.

*Allan's Wife* and a long "short story" or "novelette" called *Mairva's Revenge*, written for *Harper's Monthly Magazine* and published as a small shilling volume in 1888, rank among his best work, and offered convincing evidence to their author that his happiest vein lay in tales of adventure, preferably in an African setting. But despite Lang's assurance that he liked "your *natural* novels better a long way than your modern ones at the best," Haggard still hankered

after success with novels of contemporary society. He was much upset by the cold reception of *Beatrice*, a social melodrama, in which a brilliant young man, married to an unsatisfactory wife, falls in love with the noble daughter of a poor country gentleman, who sacrifices herself lest the scandal of divorce should ruin her lover's parliamentary career.

Bowing to the demands of his public for saga-like stories of adventure, he collaborated with Lang in *The World's Desire*, an allegory illustrating man's eternal search for ideal beauty, the world's desire, and the inevitable thwarting of success in his search by his acceptance of counterfeit beauty. Lang supplied little besides some occasional verses and the idea of starting Odysseus upon further wanderings after his reunion with Penelope at the end of Homer's *Odyssey*; Haggard was responsible for the narrative of the Wanderer's adventures in search of Helen of Troy—now a goddess in an Egyptian temple, awaiting the coming of "the wisest and bravest of men"—and his deception by the arts of Meriamun, the Pharaoh's designing Queen, ending with his death in the arms of golden Helen without possessing her. The flaw in the story, as Stevenson remarked, is that the reader's sympathies incline to Meriamun, a tragedy queen in the mould of Lady Macbeth, whose resolute pursuit of her passions endows her personality with a vitality dwarfing the lay figure of Helen and the uninspired heroism of the "crafty" Wanderer.

Published in 1891, *Eric Brighteyes* was written in an interval during which Lang mislaid the unfinished manuscript of *The World's Desire*, and it follows a similar pattern with greater success in execution. Ruthlessly Haggard adhered to his theory that the characters should be mere instruments of action; Eric is only a more heroic Wanderer, Gudruda a better Helen, Swanhild a less splendid Meriamun, and Skallagrim the Baresark, the most memorable figure of the book, is, as Lang said, "a Norse Umslopogaas." The style imitates the language of Dasent's *Burnt Njal*, the story aims to be a copy of the saga, and succeeds in capturing

something of the essential *bouquet* of poetical romance. Perhaps Lang exaggerated in calling it "a rattling good story . . . worth an infinite number of Cleopatras ;" perhaps if in later life we seek to renew our boyish enjoyment of the book, as Lang himself said of Charles Kingsley's novels, "the old pleasure . . . is not gone indeed, but it is modified." But it held enthralled in 1912 a somewhat precocious boy of nine, who felt a lump in his throat as he breathlessly read of the murder at Middalhof of Gudruda the Fair, and looked on Lancelot Speed's illustration of Gudruda, pinned to her bed, with the sword Whitefire upright between her breasts.

Haggard carried his conception of the " saga " story to an African setting in *Nada the Lily*, which was written in seven months between June 1889 and January 1890, and published in May 1892 following a serial run in *The Illustrated London News*. Of all his books this Zulu saga best withstands a critical reading ; as Lang exclaimed in enthusiasm on reading the manuscript, it is " the epic of a dying people," and his criticism that " it wants relief " only indicates the sustained power of its sombre grandeur. The spirit of tragedy moves with awful tread from the boyish prophecy of the terrible Chaka to the death of the wretched Dingaan on the Ghost Mountain. Here Haggard's talent for vivid description is most brilliantly exhibited in variety and quality, as in such scenes as the dreadful " Ingomboco " of

Galazi's narrative to Umslopogaas of the wolves leaping up at the dead man in the cave inspired Rudyard Kipling, as he wrote to Haggard in 1895, with the idea of writing his *Jungle Books*.

The dramatic vitality of this book's romantic quality undoubtedly derived from Haggard's familiarity with the scenes described and his early enthusiasm for studying the Zulu character and history. Marie Corelli could write a story in a Norwegian setting without having visited Norway,



## INTRODUCTION

Haggard believed, as he stated in his autobiography, that a man wishes to produce a really good romance dealing with some past epoch, the best thing he can do is to see the world in which the folk lived of whom he means to tell, and, were, to soak himself in the surroundings that were their background." As he had visited Egypt in 1887 for the *ic Brighteyes*, so in 1891, in search of a fitting successor to *Ada the Lily*, he travelled to Mexico. The result was *Montezuma's Daughter*, written in three months of 1891 and published serially in *The Graphic* between 1st July and 11th November 1893 before book publication in the latter month.

The manuscript of *Montezuma's Daughter* was the last to be written in Haggard's own hand. During his absence in Mexico his only son died: "Not for many years did I shake off the effects of the shock," he wrote; "indeed I have never done so altogether." Recurrent bouts of influenza, following a nervous breakdown, seriously enfeebled his constitution, and finding that he could not endure a continual stooping over a desk, he resorted to dictation to a secretary. Many novelists have found dictation a convenient method of work, but the facility of dictation—the absence of the written sentence forming beneath the critical eye—aggravated Haggard's worst fault, his carelessness in composition. This carelessness becomes blatantly apparent in the books following *Montezuma's Daughter*.

After his son's death he lost his literary ambition. He sought to soften the blow to his happiness by intense application to work, but writing novels was not enough. Unsuccessfully he contested the Liberal stronghold of East Norfolk in the Conservative interest. Residing on his wife's estate at Ditchingham, he devoted his energies wholeheartedly to agriculture and local government, remaining for many years chairman of the local bench of magistrates while his interest in Africa found scope as chairman of the Anglo-African Writers' Club and co-director of *The African Review*. The writing of fiction became a part-time job, which he practised purely for making money, and sank even lower



# INTRODUCTION

termain. In an interesting "Note Concerning Mr. Allan Quatermain," prefaced to *A Bibliography of the Works of Sir Henry Rider Haggard* (Elkin Mathews, 1947), Mr. J. E. Scott gives the chronology of the hero's life according to no fewer than eighteen stories in which he plays a part. There were also sundry imitations of *She*, and its acknowledged sequel, *Ayesha: The Return of She*, was published in 1905 with a first impression of twenty-five thousand copies, an exceptional number in those days.

It is unlikely that many of his later novels—rapidly dictated with mechanical fluency to satisfy popular demand—will ever be reprinted, though second-hand copies will always be sought by enthusiasts. Haggard himself wrote with shrewd self-criticism: "Be it good or be it bad, the best that I can do in the lines of romance and novel-writing is to be found among the first dozen or so of the books that I wrote, say between *King Solomon's Mines* and *Montezuma's Daughter*." Between *King Solomon's Mines* and *Montezuma's Daughter* in 1893 appeared the books which, with those two, most adequately represent Haggard's claim to consideration as one of the most imaginatively spectacular of romantic story-tellers—*She* in 1886, *Allan Quatermain* in 1887, *Eric Brighteyes* in 1891, *Nada the Lily* in 1892, and the two shorter African tales, *Mainw's Revenge* in 1888 and *Allan's Wife* in 1889. If the test of time supplies the qualification of a classic, then these books must now be more than half a century after their initial popularity demand admittance among the choice retainers that threaten about the mighty in literature's Valhalla. *Les précieuses* may shrink appalled from the pretensions of such intruders; there are those who have lost somewhere along the path of life the romantic susceptibility that once responded to the spell of *She*. But these well-told tales of youth, and it is hard to see how even the most despondent and disillusioned can deny that *Nada the Lily*, at least, is literature.

MALCOLM E.

## PROLOGUE

IN GIVING to the world the record of what, looked at as an adventure only, is I suppose one of the most wonderful and mysterious experiences ever undergone by mortal men, I feel it incumbent on me to explain my exact connection with it. And so I may as well say at once that I am not the narrator but only the editor of this extraordinary history, and then go on to tell how it found its way into my hands.

Some years ago I, the editor, was stopping with a friend, "*vir doctissimus et amicus meus*," at a certain University, which for the purposes of this history we will call Cambridge, and one day was much struck with the appearance of two persons whom I saw walking arm-in-arm down the street. One of these gentlemen was, I think without exception, the handsomest young fellow I have ever seen. He was very tall, very broad, and had a look of power and a grace of bearing that seemed as native to him as to a wild stag. In addition his face was almost without flaw—a good face as well as a beautiful one, and when he lifted his hat, which he did just then to a passing lady, I saw that his head was covered with little golden curls growing close to the scalp.

"Good gracious!" I said to my friend, with whom I was walking, "why, that fellow looks like a statue of Apollo come to life. What a splendid man he is!"

"Yes," he answered, "he is the handsomest man in the University, and one of the nicest too. They call him 'the Greek god'; but look at the other one, he is Vincey's (that's the god's name) guardian, and supposed to be full of every kind of information. They call him 'Charon,' either because of his forbidding appearance or because he has ferried his ward across the deep waters of examination, I don't know which."

I looked, and found the older man quite as interesting in his way as the glorified specimen of humanity at his side. He appeared to be about forty years of age, and I think was as ugly as his companion was handsome. To begin with, he was short, rather bow-legged, very deep chested, and with unusually long arms. He had dark hair and small eyes, and the hair grew down on his forehead, and his whiskers grew quite up to his hair, so that there was uncommonly little of his countenance to be seen. Altogether he reminded me forcibly of a gorilla, and yet there was something very pleasing and genial about the man's eye. I remember saying that I should like to know him.

"All right," answered my friend, "nothing easier. I know Vincey; I'll introduce you," and he did, and for some minutes we stood chatting—about the Zulu people, I think, for I had just returned from the Cape at the time. Presently, however, a stout lady, whose name I do not remember, came along the pavement, accompanied by a pretty fair-haired girl, and Mr. Vincey, who clearly knew them well, at once joined these two, walking off in their company. I remember being rather amused because of the change in the expression of the elder man, whose name I discovered was Holly, when he saw the ladies advancing. He suddenly stopped short in his talk, cast a reproachful look at his companion, and, with an abrupt nod to myself, turned and marched off alone across the street. I heard afterwards that he was popularly supposed to be as much afraid of a woman as most people are of a mad dog, which accounted for his precipitate retreat. I cannot say, however, that young Vincey showed much aversion to feminine society on this occasion. Indeed I remember laughing, and remarking to my friend at the time that he was not the sort of man whom it would be desirable to introduce to the lady one was going to marry, since it was exceedingly probable that the acquaintance would end in a transfer of her affections. He was altogether too good-looking, and, what is more, he had none of that consciousness and conceit about him which usually afflicts

handsome men, and makes them deservedly disliked by their fellows.

That same evening my visit came to an end, and this was the last I saw or heard of "Charon" and "the Greek god" for many a long day. Indeed, I have never seen either of them from that hour to this, and do not think it probable that I shall. But a month ago I received a letter and two packets, one of manuscript, and on opening the former found that it was signed by "Horace Holly," a name that at the moment was not familiar to me. It ran as follows:—

"—College, Cambridge, May 1, 18—

MY DEAR SIR,—You will be surprised, considering the very slight nature of our acquaintance, to get a letter from me. Indeed, I think I had better begin by reminding you that we once met, now several years ago, when I and my ward Leo Vincey were introduced to you in the street at Cambridge. To be brief and come to my business. I have recently read with much interest a book of yours describing a Central African adventure. I take it that this book is partly true, and partly an effort of the imagination. However this may be, it has given me an idea. It happens, how you will see in the accompanying manuscript (which together with the Scarab, the 'Royal Son of the Sun,' and the original sherd, I am sending to you by hand), that my ward, or rather my adopted son Leo Vincey and myself have recently passed through a real African adventure, of a nature so much more marvellous than the one which you describe, that to tell the truth I am almost ashamed to submit it to you lest you should disbelieve my tale. You will see it stated in this manuscript that I, or rather we, had made up our minds not to make this history public during our joint lives. Nor should we alter our determination were it not for a circumstance which has recently arisen. For reasons that, after perusing this manuscript, you may be able to guess, we are going away again this time to Central Asia, where, if anywhere upon this earth, wisdom is to be found, and we anticipate that our sojourn there will be a long one. Possibly

we shall not return. Under these altered conditions it has become a question whether we are justified in withholding from the world an account of a phenomenon which we believe to be of unparalleled interest, merely because our private life is involved, or because we are afraid of ridicule and doubt being cast upon our statements. I hold one view about this matter, and Leo holds another, and finally, after much discussion, we have come to a compromise, namely, to send the history to you, giving you full leave to publish it if you think fit, the only stipulation being that you shall disguise our real names, and as much concerning our personal identity as is consistent with the maintenance of the *bona fides* of the narrative.

"And now what am I to say further? I really do not know beyond once more repeating that everything is described in the accompanying manuscript exactly as it happened. As regards *She* herself I have nothing to add. Day by day we have greater occasion to regret that we did not better avail ourselves of our opportunities to obtain more information from that marvellous woman. Who was she? How did she first come to the Caves of Kôr, and what was her real religion? We never ascertained, and now, alas! we never shall, at least not yet. These and many other questions arise in my mind, but what is the good of asking them now?

"Will you undertake the task? We give you complete freedom, and as a reward you will, we believe, have the credit of presenting to the world the most wonderful history, as distinguished from romance, that its records can show. Read the manuscript (which I have copied out fairly for your benefit), and let me know.

"Believe me, very truly yours,

"L. HORACE HOLLY.<sup>1</sup>

"P.S.—Of course, if any profit results from the sale of the writing should you care to undertake its publication,

<sup>1</sup>This name is varied here and throughout in accordance with the writer's request.—EDDOR.

you can do what you like with it, but if there is a loss I will leave instructions with my lawyers, Messrs. Geoffrey and Jordan, to meet it. We entrust the sherd, the scarab, and the parchments to your keeping, till such time as we demand them back again.—L. H. H."

This letter, as may be imagined, astonished me considerably, but when I came to look at the MS., which the pressure of other work prevented me from doing for a fortnight, I was still more astonished, as I think the reader will be also, and at once made up my mind to press on with the matter. I wrote to this effect to Mr. Holly, but a week afterwards received a letter from that gentleman's lawyers, returning my own, with the information that their client and Mr. Leo Vincey had already left this country for Thibet, and they did not at present know their address.

Well, that is all I have to say. Of the history itself the reader must judge. I give it him, with the exception of a very few alterations, made with the object of concealing the identity of the actors from the general public, exactly as it has come to me. Personally I have made up my mind to refrain from comments. At first I was inclined to believe that this history of a woman on whom, clothed in the majesty of her almost endless years, the shadow of Eternity itself lay like the dark wing of Night, was some gigantic allegory of which I could not catch the meaning. Then I thought that it might be a bold attempt to portray the possible results of practical immortality, informing the substance of a mortal who yet drew her strength from Earth, and in whose human bosom passions yet rose and fell and beat as in the undying world around her the winds and the tides rise and fall and beat unceasingly. But as I went on I abandoned that idea also. To me the story seems to bear the stamp of truth upon its face. Its explanation I must leave to others, and with this slight preface, which circumstances make necessary, I introduce the world to Ayesha and the Caves of Kôr.—THE EDITOR.



## PROLOGUE

i  
S.—There is on consideration one circumstance that, after a perusal of this history, struck me with so much force that I cannot resist calling the attention of the reader to it. He will observe that so far as we are made acquainted with him there appears to be nothing in the character of Leo Vincey which in the opinion of most people would have been likely to attract an intellect so powerful as that of Ayesha. He is not even, at any rate to my view, particularly interesting. Indeed, one might imagine that Mr. Holly would under ordinary circumstances have easily outstripped him in the favour of She. Can it be that extremes led her by means of some strange physical reaction to worship at the shrine of matter? Was that ancient Kallikrates nothing but a splendid animal beloved for his hereditary Greek beauty? Or is the true explanation what I believe it to be—namely, that Ayesha, seeing further than we can see, perceived the germ and smouldering spark of greatness which lay hid within her lover's soul, and well knew that under the influence of her gift of life, watered by her wisdom, and shone upon with the sunshine of her presence, it would bloom like a flower and flash out like a star, filling the world with light and fragrance?

Here also I am not able to answer but must leave the reader to form his own judgment on the facts before him as detailed by Mr. Holly in the following pages.